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ABSTRACT

This tightly focused profile of an exceptionally able elementary school teacher includes background material on her youth and early years in teaching as well as an in-depth analysis of her teaching methods and relationships with students. Videotapes of her classroom performance and retrospective interviews were used to obtain information. An outstanding teacher in many areas of elementary education, she was particularly effective with mainstreamed children with reading difficulties. Eight themes were identified in her interactions with her students: (1) concepts made visually concrete; (2) frequent questioning; (3) student helpfulness to peers encouraged; (4) independent thinking praised; (5) self-concept of students promoted; (6) student responsibility for active participation in classroom encouraged; (7) structured rules and routines; and (8) nonverbal behavior used for maximizing instructional time and/or student attention. (JD)

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A Case Study of an Effective Teacher in a Suburban Mainstreamed Classroom

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, March 1989.

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Tucked in the foothills of the Virginia Blue Ridge Mountains, Charter Hills escapes both the industrial distractions of big cities and the isolation of rural villages because of the stability and cultural influence of its major "business", the university. This community is home to the well-educated college faculty and financially-comfortable cadre of small business men and women who cater to students and staff. It also houses low income projects whose residents are neither well-educated nor financially comfortable.

Stillwater County, too, is the home of university faculty and of a growing middle class, who prefer the quiet, spaciousness of the country to the nosier, "city" life. Its rolling hills, abundant water supply, and gentle climate nurture expansive cattle and horse farms. And, like Charter Hills, it harbors poor blacks and whites whose educational and financial opportunities are as restricted as the boundaries of the hollows in which they live.

This economic and educational diversity is apparent in the 483 students enrolled at Jackson Elementary School. The development of housing subdivisions in this once exclusively rural area has increased the school's population about 60% in the last six years. Now over half of the students' parents work in skilled occupations and managerial and sales services. About twenty percent are professionals, while about 10%

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work in unskilled occupations. The remaining 10% are divided equally between those who are self-employed and those who are unemployed. Approximately three-fourths of the students live in two-parents families while about 18% live in single-parent homes. Twenty-two percent of the students receive free meals or reduced meals, and about 19% of the school population is composed of minorities.

This rapid growth in population necessitated a physical expansion of Jackson. So in 1987, back hoes and bull dozers arrived to begin work on a new addition which includes administrative offices, classrooms, a kitchen, and a gymnasium.

In spite of the present overcrowded conditions and construction noise, students appeared to learn at Jackson. A quiet, efficient atmosphere, reminiscent, not of modern conglomerates, but of cottage industries, permeates its corridors and classrooms: warm and caring, yet organized and productive. Students, moving in quiet orderly lines through the hallways on their way to the library pass beneath colorful paper cut-outs of Washington, Jefferson and Betsy Ross which adorn carefully-copied reports about these famous Americans. Farther down the corridor a large green sign announces "Mr. Singleton, the principal, says everyone has a snake story. Here's his. What's yours?" An even larger expanse of yellow paper awaits students'

entries. Midway down this corridor is Mrs. Wilson's room. There are no numbers on classroom doors. Each door bears the name of the teacher, neatly printed in black magic marker. The lack of impersonal numbers fits the family feeling of the school. This fifth grade classroom exemplifies the quiet, efficiency and caring of Jackson School in general and of Mrs. Wilson in particular.

Joyce Wilson, like the county in which she lives and works, is a product of both economic limitations and growth through higher education. The only one of the ten children in her family to complete high school, Joyce knew at age 11 she wanted to go to college, even though she was not exactly sure what college was. Somehow she did know that the way to get out of the poverty compressing her life was to get an education.

Although Joyce's parents encouraged her educational interests, they were not able to give her financial assistance. So she earned money working at Krogers and in the five-and dime store in Lincoln, Virginia. With the money she saved from these jobs and with the financial help of church members, scholarship money, loans, and work-study positions, Joyce was able to attend Lincoln College. Ministers and church members continued to help her while she was in college, paying for her linens and buying her textbooks.

Her determination to meet and conquer life's "challenges" is exemplified further by her choice of college majors. Her selection of religion as one of two majors is not surprising because it had always been influential in her life. However, her choice of English as a second major is revealing. "I took some kind of test (upon entering college), and they told me I was a bit weak in English. I wasn't, and I was going to prove them wrong, so I made a joint major of English and religion".

She originally wanted to be a director of religious education and work with adolescents. She took teaching courses solely as a safeguard, something to "fall back on". She learned later that being a director required attending graduate school. At that time, married and pregnant with her first child, Joyce needed a job and could not afford to go to graduate school.

After her daughter was born, she worked as a receptionist for a pediatrician. She eventually got a job as a tenth grade English teacher. This position lasted only three months because, to her surprise, she learned she was pregnant with her second child. In 1963, teachers who were obviously pregnant were not allowed to teach in public schools. So in November she was replaced, although her son did not arrive until April. When she chose to begin working again, there were no jobs available teaching English. Consequently

Joyce took the courses she needed to be certified as an elementary teacher.

Her first elementary teaching position was in a "very suburban, elite school where all the children's parents were doctors, lawyers, or professional people." She felt she did a good job, but did not find the work challenging. The children were easy to teach. "It was like opening up their heads and pouring it in, and they gave it back".

Two years later she was transferred to an inner-city school where she taught fourth and fifth grades. She remembers most of the children as "culturally disadvantaged". Moving from a suburban school to an inner city school was an adjustment:

> I went through cultural shock and that was when I learned how to teach...I visited every child's home regardless of what the situation was or how dangerous the situation was, I went...That gave me an entirely different perspective of how to approach each of those children, and I was able to individualize my approach to them based on what I knew about their background. I think if you don't do that, if you don't get to know the child's home that you're really missing the boat as a teacher...I thought I was well-planned, probably my first two or three years of teaching, I may have had a lesson well-planned and may have understood and been able to teach the lesson thoroughly, but I didn't know what to do about these other fringe things that were happening. How to handle eruptions. What do you do when you've got a field trip and all those things. You just learn how to be a really skillful manager of time and materials and resources.

Donna Canton, who team taught with Joyce helped her a great deal. She taught Joyce about discipline

and getting children actively involved in learning. She believed in Joyce and when Mrs. Canton became principal, she gave her additional responsibilities.

Joyce was assigned to another school five years later when district lines were redrawn to effect full integration in the Lynchburg schools. Her new students were even more " culturally disadvantaged" than those in her former school. She describes several of her students as having "emotional problems".

> There is very little support outside the classroom if you have a child that's going to be a problem. You have got to come up with ways that you can live with that child day in and day out. I run a very structured classroom. It's another part of what I call survival. In order to have a good day, and in order for things to run smoothly, you've got to have a plan.

This determination to survive in the classroom, as well as in life, is tempered with a sense of caring for her mainstreamed students:

> ...if I have these children, it's my responsibility...You come up with things that will help you. You find ways to make the child feel good about himself if you possible can. Sometimes you can't do that. Some children have such a low self-esteem and it's beyond your power. The way I approach it is that I want their day with me to be the best that it can be. I want the time that they're here to be happy. I don't want to add to their miseries or add to their problems so I like to create an atmosphere where we're working together and we care about each other.

A few years later her family moved to Stillwater County. Here Joyce taught remedial reading to sixth, seventh, and eighth graders, and the following year she worked as a halftime regular education sixth grade

reading teacher and halftime administrator for the gifted program. During the next eight years, after earning a M.Ed. in administration and supervision, she held various administrative positions: assistant principal, acting principal, elementary supervisor, and Director of Instruction.

Because Joyce believes a good administrator knows what is going on in the classroom, she decided to return to the classroom in 1984. At Jackson School she once again taught fourth and fifth grades, and for the first time taught students identified as learning disabled who were mainstreamed in her class:

> I really get a kick out of those kids and...I hope I have rapport with all (of my students), but I think I have a special rapport with the ones that come from a really rough background because I've experienced that in my childhood, and I feel or empathize with what they're going through.

Perhaps this attitude is responsible, in part, for the fact that four of the 24 children in her classroom are mainstreamed students. Joyce believes, however, that teachers in the lower grades recommend mainstreamed students be assigned to her room because they know she runs a very structured classroom which provides the routines and security these students need.

Joyce's attempts to provide the structure, individualized attention, and security she believes are important to elementary school children are reflected in her thoughts about education.

> ...for me a child has succeeded if he's growing, if he's made progress...It's the person that's growing, not the amount of knowledge pouring in because... Education is learning how to live and that's what we need to do more with these children. The darn math don't matter a hill of beans if the child doesn't have self-help skills...or if he's got emotional problems, or if he's being very aggressive. Math is not as important as getting him or be able to work with other people and to feel good about himself.

This belief is apparent after only a few visits to Joyce's class. To learn how she taught and interacted with her handicapped and nonhandicapped students interviews were conducted at the beginning and end of the investigation. We also visited Joyce Wilson's class a total of seven times from mid-April to mid-May, videotaping six lessons and taking field notes on all seven observations. We observed and taped the class twice before we started gathering data to desensitize Joyce and the students to our presence. Joyce indicated after our first visit that the children were not acting like themselves, and she was right. By the time we began gathering data on our third visit, we were looking a different group of students.

We kept a log of the events which may have modified the classroom routine. For example, Joyce moved the reading group we were filming to the side of the room so that the students were not backlit on the videotapes. This change did not seem to disrupt the routine because Joyce frequently moved tables and shelves so keep things from "getting boring".

Within two days of the taping one investigator used tapes three through six to stimulate recall of Joyce's thought processes. She also used the final tape to stimulate the thoughts of one handicapped and one nonhandicapped student. Specific interview questions were prompted by episodes or behaviors on the tapes. However, in general, she asked open-ended questions such as, What are you doing here? What were you thinking then?

Joyce seemed to be unaffected by our presence. She mentioned that she had been observed by other educators frequently during her participation in various teacher training projects. Joyce appeared to continue classroom routines throughout our visits. For example, the four year old daughter of one of Joyce's parent volunteers came into the class for a short visit on Tuesdays, when her mother worked at school. When Kim arrived during one of our tapings and several of our observations, Joyce incorporated her into the reading group by asking the students to tell her what they had read that day.

Joyce kept us apprised of changes in the school routine that might affect our data gathering, such as a class field trip to Washington, D.C., and extended an open invitation to us. We set up an observation schedule immediately after our first meeting with

Joyce. We adhered to that schedule with two exceptions, and we notified Joyce in advance of the changes.

Because four out of the six children in one reading group were identified as special education students, we videotaped this reading group exclusively, although we noted classroom events and interactions among students involved in independent seat work in the field notes. On the first day of videotaping, Joyce asked the student of interest, Tabatha, to sit next to her, so that she would be in the eye of the camera. Tabatha chose that seat on all other days without prompting. Joyce gave her a lot of attention, but her interest seemed to grow out of her own genuine liking for Tabatha and not from the fact that this student was the target child. For example, Joyce indicated that she liked Tabatha for several reasons, including the fact that she worked hard and had grown in the many ways in during the time she was in Joyce's class.

After taking our leave from Joyce's classroom, we began the iterative process of analyzing the data. We started by familiarizing ourselves with the 119 codes used to assess beginning teachers' competencies in 13 areas related to effective teaching used in the Beginning Teacher-Assistance Program (BTAP). These areas include: a) academic learning time, b) accountability, c) clarity of structure, d) individual differences, e) evaluation, f) consistent rules, g) affec-

tive climate, h) learner self-concept, i) meaningfulness, j) questioning skill, k) reinforcement, l) close supervision, and m) awareness.

Once we were familiar the BTAP codes, we practiced using them by coding a teacher interview conducted during a pilot study. We independently identified and coded teacher behaviors and the thoughts which accompanied them to determine both how well we understood the BTAP categories and the extent to which we agreed on how to apply these categories. We also independently identified and labeled behaviors and thoughts for which there were no corresponding BTAP code, such as Choosing a Helper. We then compared our identifications and codes, checking for agreements and discrepancies. For the latter we discussed our individual understanding of the behavior and thoughts until we reached a consensus that was acceptable to both. For the few on which we could not agree, we sought the help of co-investigators. We repeated this process for the remaining three interviews. The result of this initial stage of analysis was the development of a list of behaviors and corresponding teacher thoughts, called action units, for each interview. We then used these action units as the basis for further analyses.

Next, we read through the action units repeatedly to get a more complete sense of the behaviors and thoughts which the teacher exhibited in all the four

interviews. We then coded every expressed thought, having already coded the behaviors using either BTAP codes or other category labels. We retained any thought code which appeared twice or more in the four interviews for further analyses of themes. Once the interview transcripts were coded and analyzed, we turned our attention to the observation notes. Any incidents not "captured" by the prior codes were labeled appropriately.

Once the data set was coded, we sought to integrate and refine the thought codes drawn from the stimulated recall interviews. When convinced that the remaining categories were salient to the teacher in our case study, we defined each category and provided supporting examples from the data. During investigation team meetings, faculty members served as devil's advocates in assessing the clarity and fit of our definitions. Together we worked to craft definitions so others could apply them to different cases, while maintaining the integrity of the categories and the fittingness. As we analyzed the data we took care to indicate which themes were noteworthy because of frequency and which were salient to teachers although not frequently occurring. Saliency was determined by the teacher stating that a thought and/or action was central to her role as a teacher.

We may best describe the themes we identified by portraying them in the context in which they occurred. To this end we invite you to visit Joyce Wilson's classroom during a typical 35 minute reading period with students in the Frontiers group. Although artistic license has been taken in connecting episodes and interactions, they all occurred during the six observations and six stimulated recall interviews. The narrative focuses on Joyce Wilson. The students' behaviors are described to increase our understanding of how Joyce interacted with handicapped and nonhandicapped student and to learn why she decided to interact as she did. To differentiate teacher's and students' remarks we noted the teacher's statements in lower case and the students' comments and responses in upper case. We also enclosed direct quotations in double quotation marks (" ") and paraphrased remarks in single quotes (' ').

The clock on the back wall of Mrs. Wilson's classroom registers 9:18 as the LD resource teacher quietly opens the door for Jack, Billy, and Tabatha who file back into their fifth grade room from their special education class. Tabatha heads for a round table at which two other girls are working on their spelling and handwriting assignments while Mrs. Wilson leads a discussion with the first of three reading groups which meet each morning.

"What else did we learn about the use of these plants, Jesse?"

'EACH ONE REPRESENTS A SEASON, LIKE A SEASON OF THE YEAR.."

Tabatha extracts a paper from her large pink canvas bag and deposits it in a cardboard box lid reserved for completed classwork. She walks to her locker behind Mrs. Wilson and removes a book stuffed with papers which plummet to the floor. Tabatha quickly looks at Mrs. Wilson to see if the noise has disturbed the group. Mrs. Wilson smiles at her and puts her finger to her lips silently reminding her that there are to be no disruptions during reading group time. Tabatha gathers up the papers and crams them back into her book, and quietly closes the locker door. She hurries back to her seat, next to the rectangular table at which Billy alternately works on his spelling and quietly talks with another boy at his table.

"Prove it by the text", Mrs. Wilson reminds the readers who are guessing at the answer to her question. Tabatha continues to rummage in her pink bag on the floor beside her chair, periodically stopping as if to rest, and then starting again. She pulls out three spiral notebooks stuffing papers back inside each one until she locates the one she wants. She glances at the clock, 9:24, and begins writing in her blue notebook. Another girl, hugging a large stuffed panda bear, leaves the reading corner to return to her seat at Tabatha's table. She takes an orange and apple,

brought for 10:00 snack time, out of her bookbag, selects the apple, and drops the orange back into her bag. She tucks her foot underneath her, rocks back on the legs of her chair and opens her workbook.

'What does a test of courage make you think of, Doug ?'

'IT REMINDS ME OF A LONG TIME AGO, IT WOULD BE LIKE IN THE ROMAN TIMES...'

'Oh, O.K., you think it's going to have some historical fiction. Any other ideas?'

A tall black girl who looks more mature than the other students pushes back her chair and moves slowly toward the reading corner where she flops down on the carpet in front of the bookcase and begins to look over the titles of books.

Three of the windows are opened to the warm April air. The sound of lumber dropping from the construction outside goes unnoticed. At one of the tables beside the windows a girl dressed like most of the students in the class, in jeans and tennis shoes, picks the wood away from the point of her pencil before taking out notebook paper and beginning to write.

The two boys at her table suddenly look up and close their workbooks. Three students in the reading corner return to their respective tables, and Billy, Jack, Tabatha, and Michele move toward the reading table as the students in the first group leave it. Two students stop by Mrs. Wilson's desk to pick up their

passes before leaving the room for the library. Doug slams his locker door shut, after exchanging one book for another. Another child sharpens her pencil while talking with Jack who has just put his completed spelling paper in the cardboard lid.

Peter, the last member of this second reading group, arrives from his Chapter One class and joins the other Frontier reading group members. Mrs. Wilson moves purposefully toward her chair positioned in the indentation of the kidney-shaped reading table.

> Reading group time is so important to the children. They get real upset if something happens that they miss their reading group time. I think the reason they feel special about it is because we're in a small group and they know they're getting a lot of individual attention even though the group might have seven or eight people, but we're all focused together and it's one of the few times during the day where they get to really express themselves and where they get to be listened to carefully and I think they really thrive on feeling like what they have to say is important...They need opportunities to perform and this is the one time during the day that they <u>know</u> is theirs and that no <u>other</u> student in another group can interfere with that time.

While the group assembles, Tabatha works undistracted by the noise which accompanies the change in reading groups, determined to finish her story so Mrs. Wilson can type it that night.

> 'Today we're going to begin a new group of stories that begin on page 137' where there are some children skiing downhill.

The Frontiers thumb through the pages while Mrs. Wilson displays the correct page and repeats the page number

again until they all find the correct page. Mrs. Wilson comments,

> 'These are going to be stories about achieving', as she writes the word 'achieving' in orange magic marker at the top of the large chart pad beside her.
>
> "Now, what does achieving mean? (pause no response)
> What does it mean? (pause no answer) If you are achieving, what are you doing?'.
>
> "LEARNING", Jack volunteers.

Mrs. Wilson repeats "learning" as she prints it on the chart

> "What else?"

A girl leaves her independent seatwork and approaches Joyce with a paper in hand. She continues to wait as Joyce questions the group members and listens intently to their answers and comments. Michele sees the girl, and thinks to herself, Mrs. Wilson don't want to be disturbed when we doing reading group. After about five minutes, the girl walks to the back of the room and deposits her paper in the cardboard lid.

Tabatha shifts in her chair, shuffling several papers. The noise attracts Joyce's attention.

> She's moving papers around again. She can be working on her handwriting or her spelling and keep her place in the story....Handwriting is a very difficult task for her so she has a tendency to just constantly be working on it....even if it's during reading group...she never loses her place in the story, (though).

Tabatha thinks to herself,

> because we go to resource, we don't have time to do our work so....I do my work when I'm in reading

group. I stop and turn the reading book to the right page and then she (Mrs. Wilson) tells me what number and so I read it...then after I finish with that page, I go back to the other work.

Billy removes his jacket. Although only 9:30, the room is already very warm.

"ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY...", Jack offers

"Wow", Mrs. Wilson exclaims.

Michele claps

"WHY'S SHE CLAPPING?" Jack asks.

"Because she thought it was so good, she gave you a round of applause"...Someone else tell me what achieving means."

She poses the question again and again recording the responses on the chart: getting good grades, taking a challenge to do something new.

'All right let's look at the stories and see if we get ideas of what achieving means... lots of times you can tell just from the title and the pictures".

Mrs. Wilson writes key phrases that describe achievement as the students point them out from the stories in this unit. A petite girl whose mussed hair and purple flowered slacks suggest she has not as yet adopted the concern for appearance and uniform dress exhibited by many students in the class glances toward the front of the room. Her eyes rest on the long narrow bulletin board which runs across the top of the chalkboard. Here student batik pictures are displayed, separating individual, laminated sheets of construction paper upon

which the class rules are neatly written in magic marker:

Use a quiet voice when you might distract others with a loud voice

Sit still by being in your seat with you arms and legs to yourself

Do careful work by reading the directions, writing neatly and checking it over

Do not use a loud voice to announce things to the class that only concern you or a few others

When it is someone's turn to talk, don't interrupt

Don't avoid doing your work by procrastinating... looking around...sharpening pencils...going to the restroom...walking around, etc.

Don't disturb others who are doing their work

Work independently by doing your work all by yourself

Wait for help by sitting quietly and working on something else

Mrs. Wilson glances at each of the students in the reading group, as if taking a mental inventory.

"Would you read the lead in, Peter?

Peter hasn't been participating. I want to bring him into the group and get him to focus on the story. I want to help him participate, to become a part of the group.

'Good, Peter. Can you tell us where this mountain is?'

Getting no response she asks,

"Would you like to choose a helper?"

As Peter thinks about who he will choose, Mrs. Wilson muses,

Choosing a help really works. If a child can't remember or can't find the answer in the text,

rather than give up or say, "I don't know" I'd rather he'd chose a helper. In doing that he listens to the person he has chosen. If I chose someone else to answer, he'd tune me out, but he won't tune out one of his peers.

Jack, the selected helper, gives the correct response.

'What part of the climb was the most dangerous? (Pause, no response)This is where we finished yesterday. You've read this.'

"THE NARROW PART"

'The narrow part. What other part was dangerous?'

Two boys who are in the seatwork group raise their hands to answer the question. Getting no response from the reading group members. Joyce sends the students back to the text to find the answer. Michele announces she's found the answer, but Joyce tells her to wait.

'I know she's ready to answer, but I have to wait and give the others a chance to find it. If I go ahead and call on her at this moment, the others would immediately quit.'

Joyce nods at Billy, the next child in the circle, signaling him to begin reading aloud. She provides words which he has difficulty reading.

'All right, Billy, what two good things happened?'

As Billy answers Joyce muses,

'I directed the question to him and not to any other student. I don't want to open it up for discussion. Billy has a problem with short-term and long-term memory. He can decode the words, but he has no comprehension. So I want to very quickly right as he's finishing his reading to get him to zero back in on what he has learned from it'. I'm not sure if Tabatha is listening...'

'Tabatha, what two things happened in Billy's paragraph?'

Jack calls out part of the answer.

'Let her talk'. Tabatha, why was using the oxygen good?' (long pause). Would you like to choose a helper?'

'YES....Billy"

After Billy gives the correct response, Joyce asks Tabatha to repeat the answer in her own words.

'Jack, will you read next?'

Jack reads slowly, word by word, and skips a line. Joyce reaches over to his book and places a strip of green paper under the omitted line for him to use as a marker.

He needs a line across there. He's really beginning to get frustrated, Joyce comments to herself.

As Jack continues to read, Joyce snaps her fingers at two students in the reading corner who are talking. They quickly stop and begin again to read. Jack continues to read. Billy doodles on his workbook cover. Suddenly Tabatha stops swinging her legs and leans forward. It's her turn to read.

'ARE THE TWO SENTENCES THE SAME OR DIFFERENT? THE DOG WAS BLACK WITH WHITE SPOTS. THE DOG WAS WHITE WITH BLACK SPOTS.

Tabatha smiles at Mrs. Wilson.

"Let her think. She's thinking. That's wonderful."

"DIFFERENT", Tabatha answers hesitantly.

"Can you draw a picture to show me how they are different?"

Tabatha smiles shyly at the other group members.

"OH, I GOT IT WRONG", Billy blurts out.

"Tabatha's going to show you how they're different."

Tabatha takes the magic marker somewhat reluctantly.

"I CAN'T DRAW DOGS."

"It doesn't matter", Mrs. Wilson assures. "We understand. First of all, you're going to draw me a dog that's black with white spots.

Michele leans forward so she can see Tabatha drawing.

Billy smiles as if vicariously enjoying the event.

As Tabatha finishes the second drawing, she thinks,

It helps me to see that one of the dogs had black spots and one of the dogs had white spots and that "different" was the right answer and "same" wasn't.

"Billy, you said you got this one wrong?" Are these dogs the same or different?"

"DIFFERENT."

'This is the same thing we've done in math. Remember sometimes in math when we need to solve a problem we said it helps to draw a picture. Doesn't it really help you, here?"

"YES", the children answer in unison.

"I love the pictures", Mrs. Wilson comments to the children as she thinks to herself,

One of the things that I feel real strongly about in teaching is that children learn how to think, and I try to word my questions so they are required to think on a little higher level. Being able to tell how something is different is a higher level type of thinking and these children are capable of doing that.

"Billy, go."

Billy takes his turn reading. Joyce quickly looks over the heads of the group members toward the reading corner. She snaps her fingers and points from the reading corner to a chair at one of the tables.

Several children have gotten into the reading corner which is their place to read, but they're not reading. They're talking to each other and it's beginning to disturb me and distract me and so rather than say anything, I try to use a lot of nonverbal behaviors. Because too much verbal and they stop listening to you and a lot of nonverbals is not picking on anyone. So rather than saying, "Get away from there, you're talking". I snap my fingers because they know what that means. They know that talking is not acceptable at this time and they know they'll have to leave the reading corner if they misuse it.

Michele leaves her chair and goes to the sink to rinse out a glue container.

Billy are those two sentences the same or different?"

Billy looks at Michele.

'Don't be looking at her for the answer, think for yourself.'

Tabatha smiles to herself, Mrs. Wilson wants him to figure it out for himself.

Michele nods, thinking he gotta know it by himself because he might know it, but he might forget, or something.

Joyce muses, I think it's probably another characteristic of this type of student. They look for clues from other people or from the teacher. He knows he's not going to get many clues from me, so he's trying to get clues from other students.

"Would you like to choose a helper?"

Joyce glances up at the clock, 9:45, already.

"Jack, it's your turn."

As Jack reads, Joyce reflects.

> He's having difficulty reading today. At times he can read very well and very fluently. At other times he can't focus on the page, and he can't get the letters to make sense to him. He tries really hard or he has tried in the past really hard to sound out the words and I've tried to get him away from that because I know he does not have comfortable decoding skills. So I've taught him to read the words that he can and to bump the other words and continue on.

Jack slaps his fist on the table, "I'M READING AWFUL".

> "That's all right sometimes you just have to get your mind going...Don't you want to go back to 'onto our backs' and see if you can read it from there?"
>
> "WHERE'S 'ONTO OUR BACKS'?"
>
> "After 'these iron plates prevent slipping."

Jack rereads that portion of the story and finishes the passage with difficulty. Joyce claps as she thinks to herself

> Just a few minutes ago, he was having a very difficult time...but he went back to it and he tried again which made me very proud of him...he remembered a strategy that I've used with him...if you don't get a word, go back and read the whole sentence and see if you can figure it out, and he did and he figured it out and it.
>
> 'What was dangerous about the climb?'

Getting no response, Joyce directs them back to the text to find the answer.

> I've tried to stress with them all year to just not be guessing at answers because this type of group of children has a tendency to just guess at everything and they also have a tendency to latch

> on to some response that another kid has given, even though that response is incorrect. So I'm trying to get them to think for themselves, and I'm also trying to show them how they can think for themselves by going to the text and proving it from the text.
>
> 'Tabatha, why are you working way back at the beginning of the workbook? I'm proud of your wanting to work on these pages,, but right now, I'd like you to stay with us where we are.' Joyce assures herself, I had to let her know, well it's fine to practice these pages, and they can do that on their own time, but right now I'd like her to stay with us in our skill lesson.
>
> 'Would you like to read?'

Tabatha begins to read and has difficulty decoding the word 'periscope'. Joyce says, "periscope" and immediately draws a periscope and writes the word on the drawing of a submarine she had sketched on the chart pad earlier.

> I feel that as many visual, auditory, concrete clues that are gonna help them learn...I'm gonna try to do as many of them as I can. They're going to have to learn through every means possible so I try to remember to do those things.

Joyce checks the time, 9:55, almost time for group to end and snack time to begin. The young child of one of Joyce's parent volunteers enters the room and runs over to sit on Joyce's lap.

> 'Billy, could you tell Kim what our story's about?'

As Billy tells the highlights of the story, Joyce thinks

> I summarize --or let the children summarize every day. Today I let the children summarize for Kim and I'll summarize just the theme of the story...I also like for them to look forward to tomorrow. Hopefully they might think about it a little bit

3. Choosing a helper, defined as: Teacher recommends students select a peer to provide an answer when they do not know the correct answer.

4. Belief in students' thinking for themselves, defined as: Teacher tells students to think independently or indicates belief that her behavior provides opportunities for students to think independently.

Actions designed to enhance student affective growth included:

5. Awareness of childrens' need to feel good about themselves, defined as: Teacher states or acts to promote student's self-concept.

6. Student accountability, defined as: Teacher holds students responsible for participating actively in the learning process and for completing assignments.

Actions designed to manage the classroom and to maximize engaged time included:

7. Establishment of rules and routines, defined as: Teacher institutes management procedures designed to maximize instructional time and/or productivity.

8. Use of nonverbal behaviors, defined as: Teacher demonstrates nonverbal behavior for the purpose of maximizing instructional time and/or student attention.

After over two decades as an educator in Virginia, Joyce and her husband, also a teacher, have moved to Costa Rica. They wanted to travel and see the world and could afford to do so only by working so they applied to teach in the Department of Defense (DOD) schools overseas. Her husband will be teaching math and science to dependents of American military personnel. Joyce does not have a job as yet. Ironically, in spite of her years of elementary teaching experience,

> or they might try to sneak a peek...If they do that all the better for them because they need all the advantages they can get...If I sort of tell them what we're going to do tomorrow, at least, they know what they've got to look forward to and what to expect the next day in class. I don't want them to feel surprised or feel that what we're going to be doing might be threatening or too hard for them.
>
> 'Before group ends I need your worksheets.'

All members except two boys hand in their papers. She asks Billy and Jack when they could finish the work. They agree to have their sheets done by math time. Jack asks if he can help Peter with his story for the class newspaper. Mrs. Wilson denies the request while acknowledging his good intent.

Joyce reminds herself,

> Having knowledge of my children helps. Jack would like for me to let him help Peter, but they would be doing more socialization...so rather than saying, "Naw, you'll just misbehave or something", I try to give him a reason why Peter needs to work by himself and not put him (Jack) down...I try to let him think that that was nice of you to ask, but at this moment, I'd like for Peter to think about it himself. I didn't...reject his offer.

Epilogue

In summary, from our observations and interviews we identified eight themes which were salient to Joyce's interactions with her students. Action designed to improve academic learning included:

1. Awareness of the need to make concepts visually concrete. This theme was defined as: Teacher provides visual clues for the purpose of increasing instructional opportunities to students.

2. Frequent questioning, defined as: Teacher elicits responses from students.

she is not certified to teach elementary education in the DOD schools because the courses she took for certification were not labelled "methods" classes. Joyce, however, is not discouraged and hopes to work as a substitute teacher. She looks at this as an exciting time, and although, she does not know what the future holds, she will, as she always has, make the best of it.